

# Restoration

*“Restoration uses the past not as a goal but as a reference point for the future. If we seek to re-create [ecological]... communities of centuries past, it is not to turn back the evolutionary clock but to set it ticking again.”*

—Donald A. Falk  
*Discovering the Future,  
Creating the Past: Some Reflections  
on Restoration*

Congress declared the National Park System to be the “cumulative expressions of a single national heritage” because it includes the “superlative natural, historic, and recreation areas in every major region of the United States.” Sustaining the diverse and awe-inspiring natural and cultural wonders of this nation for future generations increasingly involves healing the wounds of the past. For this reason, ecological restoration—intensive efforts to recover disturbed natural systems—plays an important and growing role in NPS efforts to fulfill its mission. In 2003, restoration efforts took many forms, from reestablishing natural conditions along a cave tour route and halting unnatural erosion to controlling exotic rats on Anacapa Island and returning the swift fox to the Badlands of South Dakota. In many cases success was enhanced by working with dedicated partners, including corporations, state agencies, and private citizens. Restoration involves a long-term commitment of energy and resources, but as the articles in this chapter make clear, the benefits are priceless.



Since 2000, resource managers of the National Park Service and scientists from the Natural Resource Conservation Service have been working together to restore the Oak Island sandscape at Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Michigan. They established plots for monitoring in areas where they had heavily planted and where they had tried various techniques to control exotic vegetation.